THE
Virtuous Wife.
A
POEM.

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In Anſwer to the

CHOICE,

That would have

No WIFE.

CONTAINING

I. *The Virtuous Wive's Character.*
II. *Her Perſon.*
III. *Her Parts.*
IV. *Her Religion.*
V. *Her Temper.*
VI. *Her Conduct.*
VII. *Her Converſation.*

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TO

T. L. Of Gray's-Inn, *Esq*;

Honoured SIR,

ALL *Ceremony* apart. You know, 'tis no *Sin* to be *Marry'd*, let the *Fortune* of it be what it will : But nothing brings *Matrimony* more in Disgrace then an *Inconsiderate Choice* : However, this is no Reflection upon your Conduct and Courtship; Only be pleased to take this *Uxorious Poem*, as it was meant, for *Diversion* rather then *Direction* or *Dicipline* : For to attempt upon *Regulating* your *Love*, or *Correcting* your *Discretion*, would be as Impertinent Pedantry, as to *Prescribe* to the *Colledge*, or *Dictate* to *Solomon*. Your *single Wisdom*, and my own *Weakness* will in a great Measure justify the *Comparison*; *Love* and *Law* do very well together; and *Marriage* is much obliged to 'em *Both*. But in short, *Sir*, without any farther Formality of *Preface* or *Address*, if you can Countenance this *Trifle* with your *Favour*, and encourage it into the *World* with your *Approbation*, it will be a mighty *Complement* indeed to the *Subject*, as well as an *Honour* to,

Worthy SIR,

Your most Humble Servant

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THE
Virtuous Wife.

IF *Heaven* would a greater *Bleſſing* give
To *Humane Nature*, then it is to *Live*;
I'd wiſh the *Bleſſing* of a *Virtuous Wife*,
Free from all Fullſome Vice, and free from Strife,
To Crown th' *Imperfect Happineſs* of *Life*.

I. II.

A *Wife*, whoſe Faireſt *Character* ſhould be,
Agreeable for *Mien* and *Modeſty*:
Her *Perſon*, Airy, Graceful and Genteel,
To pleaſe the Phancy and her Charms reveal.
A *Beauty*; rather with *Proportion* bleſt,
Then with a Gawdy falſe *Complexion* dreſt:
For *Flow'rs* are *Fading*; and the *Fineſt Face*,
Like *Faireſt Bloſſoms* ſooneſt looſe their *Grace*.
So Gay Complexions Charm the Fooliſh *Eye*,
As *Roſes* only pleaſe the *Senſe*, and Dye
An *Emblem* of their *Fair Mortality*.

But

But Lasting *Symmetry*, and Handsome *Shape*
Out-live *Disease*, and *Beauty's Fate* escape.

III.

Her *Parts* should be as *Noble*, *Great* and *Good*,
As *Nature* pleas'd, or *Education* wou'd:
For *Nat'ral Parts* without *Improvement*, are
Neither worth *Admiration*, nor my *Pray'r*.
The Gifts of *Nature* that are nee'r so *Fine*,
Are but gross *Gold* in the *Impurest Mine*;
And *Diamonds unpolish'd* want Esteem:
'Tis Art and *Education* make them *Clean*.
Reading Good *Books*, and *Needle-work*, should be
Her whole Diversion and Felicity.
The *Lady's Calling* teaches no *Romance*,
For fond *Intreagues of Love* or *Modes* of *France*.
But *solid Wit* and *Virtue's* still secure,
Against *Temptation* and against *Amour*.
A *Wife*, well-Read in *Books* of Sacred Note;
Ingenious, but not *Witty* to a *Fau't*:
Not forward in *Discourse*, nor Fond, nor Proud
Of being *Heard*, or being *Understood*:
Wisdom's Reserv'd; Discreet, as well as Good.

IV.

A *Wife*, *Religious*, and *Moral* too;
Just to her *God*; and to her *Husband* true,

I'd have her often in her Cloſet *Pray*,
And go to *Church* with *Chriſtians* ev'ry Day;
Devout, Sincere and Pious in her Way.
But whether *Proteſtant*, or *Papiſt*, Good
In all the *Offices* of *Fleſh* and *Blood*.
No *Bigot* in *Devotion*; not *Confin'd*
Againſt the *Laws* and *Libertys* of Mind;
To *this* or *that* Religion *a-la-mode*:
Not ſham'd, nor ſcar'd out of the good old Road,
For fear of being out of *Faſhion* with her *God*.
Different Perſwaſions ſhould not make us *Foes*;
For *Love* that's *Real* no *Religion* knows.

V.

I'd have her *Humour*, Generous, not Cloſe;
Frank, but not Fond; Reſerv'd, but not Moroſe.
Her *Inclination*, fixt; her *Temper* Free,
Within the Bounds of *Common Decency*.
Not Flaunting, Foppiſh, Gadding, or Unkind
To *Sober Virtue*, and her *Spouſes Mind*:
Not *Hypocritical*, Corrupt, nor Baſe;
And only *Good* for want of *Time* and *Place*.
But *Teſt* againſt *all Opportunity*,
Of being Looſe in *Private*, being Free
In *publick Revels* and *Ill Company*.
For *Vicious Plays*, and *Balls*, and *Dancing-Schools*,
Make *Modeſt Wives* turn either *Whores* or *Fools*.

VI.

Could ſuch a *Virtuous Wife*, I wiſh, be given;
I'd own that *Marriages were made in Heaven.*
Whoſe *Converſation's* Fair; and *Conduct*, Free;
Within the *Rules* of ſtrict *Morality*;
Not *gaping* up to ev'ry *Paultry Clown*
That lurks for ſly *Debauch* about the *Town.*
Under the *Maſk* of kindneſs, and what not,
Reſpect, Civility, the *Cringing Sot*
Falſely *cajoles*, and carries on his *Plot.*
Not ſuch a *Lady* of the Rampant Age,
As loves her *Footman*, *Butler*, or her *Page.*
Not *Countenancing* any *Fops* Pretence
Upon *Integrity* and *Innocence*,
With either *Word*, or *Look*, or *Forc'd Salute*,
That may Encourage the *Uſurping Brute.*
Who values *Reputation* next her *Life*,
She's *Heaven's Bleſſing*, and the *Virtuous Wife.*
And *She's* the moſt Reſerv'd of *Woman-kind*;
Moſt Innocent, moſt Modeſtly inclin'd;
Confines her ſelf, and does not think her ſelf Confin'd.

VII.

Her *Converſation's* Juſt, her *Conduct's* Nice,
As if *She* lived ſtill in *Paradice.*
Above the Reach of *Malice* and *Diſgrace*,
For being too Familiar, Fond, or Baſe:

Above

Above *Reflexion* of the Vileſt *Tongue*
For keeping *Little Company* too Long ;
She knows *Contempt's* the Burden of *that Song*.
She ſtill diſtinguiſhes 'twixt *Good* and *Evil*.
Defies *Diſhonour*, and Defies the *Devil*.
This is *that Happy Creature* who will be
A Noble *Pattern* to *Poſterity* ;
And few ſo Fortunate, ſo Bleſt as me !
In *Rolls of Fame* among the *Female Lives*,
The beſt of *Women*, and the beſt of *Wives*.
Nay, could th' *Ingenious* CHOICE ſo Happy be,
He'd have a *Wife*, and wiſh to *live* like me.

FINIS.